

leading up to the decision to run for office to fully appreciate how politicians choose to navigate the political world. Weghorst argues that by considering these life trajectories holistically, we gain deeper understanding of the path-dependent processes that can critically shape both public and private routes to public office. He identifies two specific paths that help explain nomination outcomes in electoral autocracies: civic activism and careers in civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations are more likely to forge pathways to opposition candidacy, while career partisanship tends to lead to ruling-party candidacy.

One of the most intriguing implications of the argument is how the lifetime experiences of individuals can condition the payoffs (or costs) of running for office in profoundly different ways for opposition and ruling party members, respectively. For example, among opposition candidates, experience with civic activism teaches them that there can be benefits in losing elections, which increase the willingness of such candidates to bear the risks of running for office in authoritarian regimes. Weghorst stresses that such candidates are no less rational than the ruling party members who run to win; rather, because rationality is inherently subjective, the potential benefits of running for office may be about more than just material gains.

To test his claims, Weghorst uses a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to illuminate how experiences with civic activism early in life translate into opposition candidacy down the line. One of Weghorst's most innovative analytical approaches is using sequence analysis on life history calendars to document various pathways to candidacy. Sequence analysis considers the entirety of a respondent's or case's related events/states together as a single observation (a sequence). This approach enables us to consider trajectories holistically—comparing the entire careers of individuals side by side. Weghorst is among the first to deploy this methodology in a political science framework and the potential extensions to other fields of inquiry abound: it could easily be applied to the study of personnel in bureaucracies, government ministries, judiciaries, militaries, and so on. Any scholar interested in unpacking the lifetime trajectories of government personnel—and the interactions between institutional structure and political behavior—could benefit from using this analytical approach.

While the life history calendar is one of the most intriguing analytical contributions of the book, one potential caveat of the method is that information is self-reported. Specifically, data on career trajectories is collected using grid-form questionnaires that track events and activities over time. In this case, respondents were asked to document significant early moments in their political careers (e.g., the first time they organized a local grassroots community meeting or the first time they became an official member of a political party). Because life history calendars are compiled retrospectively by the

individual under study, one might be concerned about selective memory and social desirability biases—concerns that Weghorst is up front about (though how an individual remembers their own history may be telling, too). Nonetheless, Weghorst is able to address some of these concerns by triangulating across many sources on the political careers of his research subjects, which enables a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches. These additions are key to the development of the book as a whole: the rich qualitative case narratives woven throughout the text not only flesh out causal mechanisms but also humanize the life narratives that are at the heart of this analysis. This book will undoubtedly serve as a template for students and practitioners of mixed-methods research.

The empirical innovations of this book are manifold: it is the first to comprehensively document the candidate decision-making process for national legislatures in Africa; it is also among the first political science works to use the life history calendar method (and the first to do so in the African context). The data from Tanzania in particular are rich and expansive, including archival research, in-depth interviews with political elites, an original database of the CVs of more than 700 politicians, and original survey data from the legislature. The survey deserves special mention for its comprehensiveness, including responses from winning candidates, losing candidates, unsuccessful nomination seekers, and prospective candidates. Collecting information on losing, successful, and even prospective candidates is a critical part of his analytical strategy and offers convincing demonstration of his theory on different pathways to nomination, particularly those paths not taken.

Political scientists tend to take history into account by looking at path dependencies on a macro level—the broad, expansive structures and forces that condition a variety of institutional outcomes. But this book reconsiders path dependency on a micro level—the personal, intimate choices and opportunities that can critically determine individual trajectories. Indeed, Weghorst's treatment of path dependency—both conceptually and empirically—stands out as one of his key intellectual contributions and is what makes this book important reading for any scholar of political institutions and history. It deserves a broad readership.

### **The Politics of Bad Governance in Contemporary**

**Russia.** By Vladimir Gel'man. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022. 238p. \$75.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

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Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine put the spotlight on the impetus for the Kremlin's undertaking of a blunder of historic proportions. Besides the damage

inflicted on Ukraine, the invasion has arguably set back Russian development by decades, forcing thousands of highly educated professionals into exile and cutting Russia off from lucrative export markets and international supply chains. It has ironically undermined President Putin's long-stated ambition to catch up to the West technologically and firmly establish the country as a great power.

Vladimir Gel'man did not predict the invasion (nor did other country specialists) but his trenchant analysis of the pathologies of governance in Russia goes a long way toward making sense of this senseless war. Unlike accounts that focus on the nature of Russia's regime or the strength of its state, Gel'man focuses on the quality of its governance, which he labels—eschewing both jargon and ambivalence—“bad.” His analysis implicates a combination of informal networks and practices as the root of Russia's problems, and individual agents as the prime movers. In governing badly, political elites deliberately ensure that the state is operated informally and arbitrarily in order to extract rents. They prioritize private gains over public goods and politics over policy. They resist efforts to strengthen the rule of law and constantly work to fend off competition over rents from other insiders. Gel'man distinguishes his agency-centered approach—“purposeful actions of political and economic actors who aimed to maximize benefits for themselves” (p. 31)—from accounts that privilege institutions or historical legacies as explanations for Russia's maladies.

This optic allows Gel'man to examine failed reforms of institutions such as Russian Railways, university examinations, the state administration, the social benefits system, and the police, in each instance highlighting problems of top-down supervision and inter-agency rivalries within the notionally rule-based “power vertical.” These case studies reveal how, time and again, nominally public-oriented initiatives are thwarted by self-interested bureaucratic insiders, demonstrating two classic Olsonian logics: concentrated interests winning out over the public good, and “roving bandits” seeking a quick ruble. Repeatedly, leaders realize that following through on difficult changes may reduce their power or prestige, leading them to back down and accept the (profitable) status quo.

On this basis, in Chapter 3, Gel'man dismantles the myth of “authoritarian modernization” that the government has used to legitimize its curtailing of political freedoms. While there have been sporadic successes within pockets of efficiency, they are few and far between amid a heap of failed projects. As Chapter 4 details, the only successful transformations have enjoyed an unusual coincidence of top-level prioritization, concentration of reforms in a single agency, and a short time frame. Thus, the tax code was changed early in Putin's first term, but more complex reform initiatives have failed. Even the Soviet space program, a paragon of technocratic

management, was eventually consumed by bureaucratic self-interest after its initial successes.

*The Politics of Bad Governance* is an important contribution to Russian politics and policy, and authoritarian and comparative politics more generally. The book pairs a parsimonious and somewhat provocative thesis with case studies shedding light on governance in Russia. In probing deeply into policy development and implementation, Gel'man flaunts his vast knowledge of the inner workings of the Russian state—also evident in his prolific publication record going back decades—rather than the flashier but well-trodden ground of Russia's foreign policy (mis)adventures or Putin's consolidation of autocracy. While the book is probably the best overview of thirty years of intermittent and failed modernization in Russia, it can also come off as overly wonkish at times for non-specialists.

Gel'man's emphasis on agency over structures raises interesting questions. Agency figures in two ways: in the creation of the system in the 1990s and in the stifling of attempts to change it over time. Yet once the system has been molded, it is questionable whether Gel'man's case studies actually demonstrate the primacy of agency as an explanatory factor. The agents impeding reform—local officials, school directors, and various middle managers—work within the system they inherited, which constrains both their freedom of action and those of reformers. In this way, earlier agency has created structures that in turn impede later agents. The result is an account in which an understanding of how the system operates, and perpetuates itself, is critical. Although Gel'man seeks to distinguish his argument from previous accounts implying that the system is sticky and plausibly unchangeable, *Bad Governance* covers much the same ground as Alena Ledeneva's (2013) “*sistema*” and Henry Hale's (2014) “patronal politics.”

How exceptional is Russia? Gel'man positions it as a “deviant” case (p. 6) in light of its high standard of living and human capital. Yet the maladies that Gel'man cites afflicting Russia—overregulation, bureaucratic sluggishness, turf battles, short-termism, institutional inertia, patronage politics, rent-seeking, and the prioritization of politics above policy—have long been the global norm rather than the exception, and are present to some degree even in well-governed countries. In light of recent challenges to democracy across the world, Russia may be seen as a precocious case of middle- and upper-income countries whose leaders deliberately manipulate the system for their own benefit, a club joined more recently by Turkey, Hungary and Trump's United States (p. 139). Russia may therefore not be so deviant after all.

As to whether there is any way out, Gel'man's prognosis is appropriately pessimistic. International leverage worked with willing Eastern European elites intent on joining the EU, but not on ensconced Russian functionaries. Pockets of efficiency are small-scale and doomed due to eventual neglect or politics. Digitization has been introduced with

much fanfare in many nondemocratic states, yet policy makers protective of their prerogatives will not allow any innovation to usurp their power.

Perhaps Gel'man's most disconcerting yet unsurprising conclusion is that free and fair elections are unlikely to make a dent, at least in the near term. While democracy may be a necessary step toward more accountability and better governmental performance, precedents show that it is not a sufficient condition to break free from old patterns. Instead, the most likely outcome is a broadening of the scope for new entrants to compete over the spoils of corruption.

This book was published before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The consequences of that invasion, as of spring 2023, vividly demonstrate bad governance in action. Not only did most Western analysts and intelligence agencies overlook the dysfunction in Russia's military and ministry of defense, the Kremlin was also deceived into believing it was deploying an efficient war machine rather than the ramshackle, bloated, and decaying clunker it turned out to be. The supremacy of politics over competence was visible in the runup to the invasion, when spies told their superiors what they wanted to hear about whether Ukrainians would fight back, and ground troops were misled about whether they were going to war. Putin's naïve faith in the system he created both enabled the decision to invade and explain how Ukraine's significantly outmatched army has managed to fight Russia's to a standstill. Yet, faced with the most comprehensive sanctions in history, Russia also managed to stabilize its currency, reroute its supply chain, and stave off a collapse in GDP, pointing to both the skill of technocrats (e.g., in the Central Bank) and the adaptability of a system built on informality. Gel'man expects countries governed badly to muddle through and avoid catastrophes, but perhaps the best to be hoped for from the war is that bad governance, taken to its extremes, ends up destroying its own foundations. Unfortunately, before this can happen, things are likely to get much worse.

**The Roots of Engagement: Understanding Opposition and Support for Resource Extraction.** By Moisés Arce, Michael S. Hendricks, and Marc S. Polizzi. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. 216p. \$83.00 cloth.

**The Politics of Extraction: Territorial Rights, Participatory Institutions, and Conflict in Latin America.** By Maiah Jaskoski. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. 296p. \$74.00 cloth.  
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Mineral extraction deeply affects marginalized populations in many parts of the Global South. It shapes domains of enormous relevance to contemporary societies, such as resource management, climate change, and inequality.

Two recent and novel contributions endeavor to explain when and how affected communities mobilize for and against extraction.

In *The Roots of Engagement: Understanding Opposition and Support for Resource Extraction*, Moisés Arce, Michael Hendricks, and Marc Polizzi explore a compelling puzzle. Academic and journalistic accounts often focus on public, highly visible acts of resistance to extractive projects. Although this resistance may constitute the modal response, some individuals on “extractive frontiers” support extraction (p. 7), particularly because of its redistributive potential (e.g., increased local development and employment opportunities). Often, these perspectives do not arise in public discourse because they are not expressed through public demonstrations (p. 14). The authors undertake an ambitious project: to theorize and empirically analyze support for extraction.

Arce, Hendricks, and Polizzi provide a novel and complex—yet parsimonious—argument: participation in community organizations (*social engagement*) generally increases opposition to extraction through three key mechanisms. These organizations provide both *information* for members to understand the threat from mining and *resources* to organize resistance to it; they increase members' sense of *efficacy*, empowering them to challenge the actors who engage in resource extraction; and they build connections among members, establishing a *community worldview* that emphasizes nonmaterial concerns around identity, territory, and culture.

Although the book's argument provides a clearly articulated theory of *opposition* to extraction, it seems to implicitly assume that individuals who do not oppose extraction support it. The authors suggest that those who are not socially engaged will be more likely to “accept the discourse from outside sources...[that] mining will bring employment opportunities or development to the area” (p. 22). However, the counterfactual outcomes to opposition likely include both support and relative indifference. Readers might have benefited from a more explicit engagement with how the theory would disentangle support, opposition, and indifference. For example, under what conditions might social engagement—particularly with certain organizations—lead to support for extraction?

A strength of the book lies in its convincing and skillful evaluation of the argument in three empirical cases—Nicaragua, Peru, and South Africa—with a chapter devoted to extraction sites in each. In the Tambo Valley of Peru, producer associations and irrigation boards have organized agricultural interests to oppose the Tía María open-pit copper mine, whereas in Nicaragua's Rancho Grande, church leaders have assumed a primary role in organizing opposition to mining. In contrast to the previous two cases, an open-pit coal mine in Fuleni, South Africa, faced relatively less opposition. The authors argue that communities in Fuleni are more geographically